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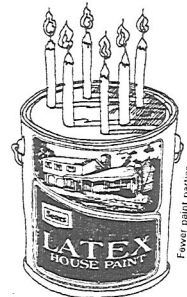
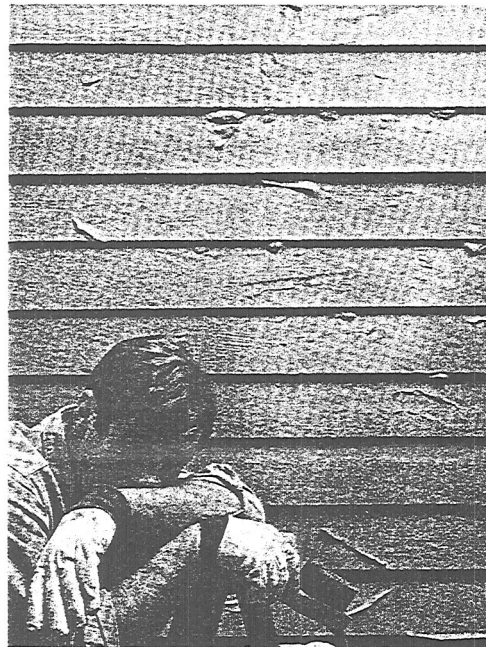
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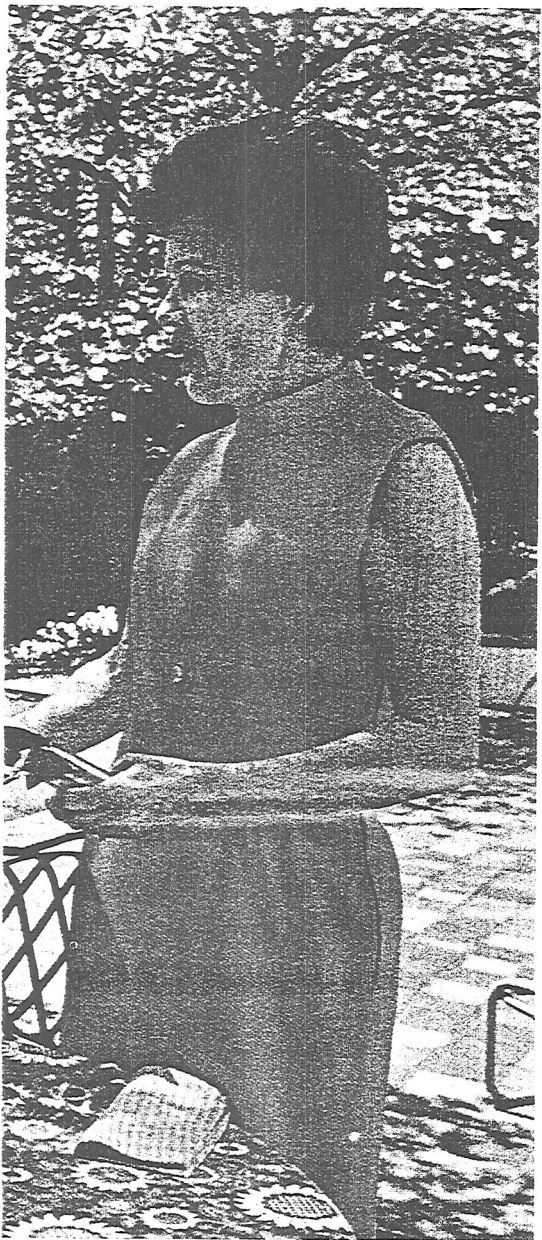
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In Washington, on a terrace bright with dogwood and azalea, the relaxed ex-Secretary and his wife Marg start through their morning mail.

*An extraordinary public servant, who will not write his*

# *McNamara Seen Now,*



by BROCK BROWER

He would be sitting there in his shirtsleeves, behind that cavernous General Pershing desk in 3E880 of the Pentagon, concentrating so hard that—with his pug nose, his hunched neck and set jaw, his long, black hair just a little shaggy over the back of his collar—he'd look, despite the glasses, almost a shade Neanderthal. "Robert McNamara works at his day different from you and me," one of his Assistant Secretaries once told me. "He works *all* the time. I still haven't figured out his powers of concentration. You can just see him in there, tense, his feet wrapped around the chair legs. It's like a laser beam boring down." Often he wouldn't look up until I reached the corner of the desk. But then immediately, after the briefest courtesies, he'd get me right back on some matter he was worried he'd left dangling, some not-quite-fully-structured remark he'd let slip maybe two weeks ago after a day's skiing out in the Rockies. "I want to add a couple of corollaries to what we were talking about in Aspen." And while I was still struggling to dig the original premise up somewhere out of those past snowdrifts, he would be off on an exact line of argument, with what would probably have been, back there in Colorado—if he hadn't been relaxing—his next forceful point.

"I was saying that you must have nuclear weapons, but you can only commit murder—or suicide—when you use them. They don't give you any capability for a military response to anything less than a threat to your very existence. It's taken seven years to get that across to NATO, but the Europeans are coming along with us now. I think history will record that we did at last get people to recognize the realities of strategic nuclear warfare.

"Now, the first corollary is this business of restraint in the application of power. You've got to have overwhelming power, sure, but it's got to be applied with restraint. Any war in a nuclear age has to be fought with restraint. This is especially pertinent in the case of the *Pueblo*. Several congressmen have said, 'Blow a goddam city off the map,' but—and this is extremely important—we haven't yet fired a shot. That's the strategy of restraint. It's had two clear successes—Berlin and Cuba. One partial success—Vietnam. And now there's a clear need for it with the *Pueblo*. Very interesting that there's not so much objection to this now as you'd ex-

pect. Some people are saying we're only acting with restraint because we're overextended, but that's not why. We're not overextended. It's because you've got to act with extreme caution when you're in contact—or near contact—with an adversary, in the shadow of nuclear power.

"The second corollary has to do with the matter of nuclear superiority. You hear that word 'superiority' cropping up again and again. But superiority is not superiority any more. If you were an intellectual, you'd say, contrary to Gertrude Stein, a rose is not a rose is not a rose. Superiority is not superiority is not superiority. Numerical superiority in nuclear weapons does not give you any capability whatsoever to protect your political power."

By then I would have caught up with him, even begun to question a few of his points, but I never could get over feeling initially cowed by the way he could always so instantly pick up any past train of thought—in this particular case, one I would have said lay buried out on some ski slope under at least 40 inches of fresh powder. How, in the midst of a week when, as he later said himself, "we lost four nuclear bombs, inadvertently invaded Cambodia and got pirated on the high seas by a tenth-rate power," did he manage to remember exactly where he'd left off, days back, with me?

Yet when I asked him as much, he simply shrugged. He wasn't conscious of any mental gymnastics. The subject of restraint in a nuclear age happened to be, he said, "very much on my mind," and the sudden, carefully keeled flow of ideas was, if anything, engrained habit. In fact, a habit of power, the very power that he used to control the immitigable, worldwide, fateful operations of the Defense Department for seven years, to impose his will upon what he once called "a jungle" and leveled, for a time at least, to a plain. He was the only one who ever "really ran the place," as so many have said; and he did so, over a longer tenure than any previous Secretary of Defense, by just this resiliency of mind, this force of intellect. He managed, however briefly, to solve that maze of 7,000 offices, 150 staircases, 17½ miles of corridors, etc., which can so effectively hide actual military strength—or the lack of it—in the windings and turnings of innumerable cross-purposes. His hard answer was a single, orderly

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memoirs, opens up about himself

## Full Length

## What do you do when your shoe rubs your foot the wrong way?

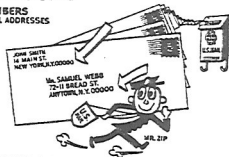
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## McNamara CONTINUED

process, called the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS), by which he insisted all the services think through their requirements—not in big words, but in exact quantities—to suit a consistent, much saner appraisal of their several missions. "The Army was preparing for one length of war, and the Air Force for another," he states one clear instance of the problem. "There had to be control at the top, total departmental control to resolve a conflict like that."

And, indeed, it was just such control that many felt, during his last months in office, might finally be slipping from him. The structure he had founded upon planning and logic, carried forward by the careful construction of syllogism upon syllogism, seemed suddenly threatened by the chaos of events half a world away. Especially after the Vietcong's Tet offensive, the old emotionalism of the military, which he had so long kept down, appeared to revive, putting forth a fervid Resolve to Win and an overbearing request for 206,000 more troops. Estimates of his real impact upon the Pentagon turned critical and, even with the President's final decision to follow once again the counsels of restraint, there still remains a question as to whether McNamara has established more than personally—permanently, institutionally—his ideal of systematic control.

## He bypassed an admiral who cited John Paul Jones

Certainly he sought that control aggressively, bringing to bear at the top an intellect that reached down everywhere into the bottom of things, exceeding swift, after the apprehension of the minutest details. "His mind works awfully fast," says Paul H. Nitze, his last Deputy Secretary. "Other people have gone to the first, second and third levels, but he gets right to the fourth level. He drives right into a problem." Even, sometimes, right over those who might seem to be obstructing a solution, e.g., Admiral George W. Anderson, CNO, in the Navy Flag Plot at the height of the Cuban missile crisis. When McNamara arrived there to observe the location of various Russian shipping headed toward Cuba, he began raising points that Admiral Anderson confidently considered to be the Navy's own business: Were there Russian interpreters aboard the blockading ships? How would the Soviet freighters be hailed? Which ship

would be stopped first? What would our ships do if the Russians refused to stop? Admiral Anderson answered by holding up a copy of U.S. Navy Regulations and remarking that the Navy had been operating blockades successfully since the days of John Paul Jones. McNamara replied that the trouble was the Navy hadn't learned anything since the days of John Paul Jones, and walked out to set up exact, clear-cut procedures for controlling the quarantine through his own office. "What Admiral Anderson didn't understand," McNamara says, reflecting on the incident, "was that the quarantine was not just a blockade. It was a line of communication from President Kennedy to Premier Khrushchev." Or as Nitze explains: "It became a question of execution, and McNamara was just determined that the execution would take into account all the foreign policy considerations down to the finest detail. Anderson just didn't realize how deep down into the structure that authority was going to reach." And so he ended up as ambassador to Portugal.

From the very beginning, McNamara had determined upon this penetrating reach, this cerebral dominance over the Defense Department. "I asked President Kennedy if he wanted a socializing, speech-making Secretary," he recalls, "or a working Secretary, which I could be." When Kennedy granted him full authority as a working Secretary, he started right off by issuing an immediate round of questions concerning 96 projects to all appropriate department heads, which soon became known in the Pentagon as "McNamara's Ninety-six Trombones." They first announced, by their loud trump, his dire, analytical approach. "It meant the top people had to do a lot of staff work themselves," continues Nitze, "and he insisted that this be done right down to the lower levels. It irritated the devil out of some people who were used to doing things the other way—by arbitrating, acting as judges. Also, he often knew 10 times as much as the people who came to see him anyhow." He depended for these quanta of knowledge upon a memory which Nitze describes as "differential," i.e., not photographic but selective, able to slough off all extraneous and unimportant matters. A disciplined, precise, capacious recollection that can always produce the needed figure, the proper train of thought, additional corollaries; but then again, never, very likely, any memoirs.

In fact, he has already decided against any memoirs. Ever. It wasn't even among the 10% of decisions that he felt required some

study and thought. It was way down low among the 90% of matters that he tried to decide immediately, because no decision would still have been a form of decision. "I'm never going to write what other people said at moments of crisis and tension," he states flatly. He'll talk, in the broad, about some of his own inner triumphs—the "terrific elation" he felt, for example, when the Soviet ships suddenly went dead in the water during the missile crisis—and even about a few of his errors. "I get charged with the TFX. It's nothing compared to the Bay of Pigs, or my failure for four years to integrate off-base military housing. I don't want you to misunderstand me when I say this, but the TFX was only money. We're talking about blood, the moral foundation of our future, the life of the nation, when we talk about these other things." But as for any gossip from higher counsels, any hint of the sallies and passions and clashes that touch grand strategy, they are immediately, rigidly, something else again.

## 'We dreamed up the quarantine over lunch'

"They're raw material," he dismisses them, "not history." They occur in what he likes to call "a free-thought environment," and are privileged by their sensitivity, but even more so by their imprecision. After all, what force do they reliably measure, what contingency do they accurately define? He has only the most reluctant memory for them and over the years has kept no notes. "Oh, a few." He wrote something down, at President Kennedy's request, during the missile crisis, and when really pressed, he will finally admit he has some recollection how the idea for the blockade originated. "Ideas don't come from any one man, you realize," he first cautions. "You pick them up everywhere." But in this particular case, he happens to remember that "Ros"—Roswell Gilpatric, his first Deputy Secretary—"Ros and I first discussed the idea of a quarantine over lunch." He waves toward the door to the conference room where he usually takes his noon meal and unwraps a little from his chair, even hikes his right leg up over its arm. "We were at our wits' end, not knowing how to respond. The two principal proposals had been either knock-the-hell-out-of-them or don't-do-anything. Neither of which, of course, was going to get the missiles out of Cuba. We felt that there must be

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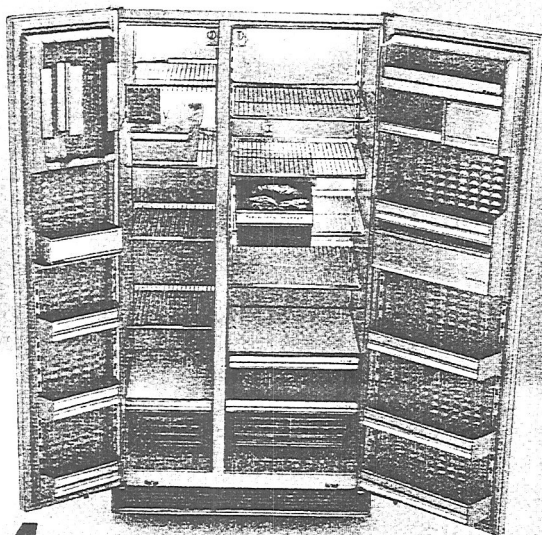
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\*Patent Pending

## McNamara CONTINUED

something in the middle." So they explored the middle for options, and once they'd hit on the idea of the quarantine: "No, I never changed."

But already this is saying too much. The right leg drops back down again. "I'll stand," he says instead, "by those 42 red-covered volumes." Monumental folios, imposingly shelved, containing his precisely reasoned, expository official papers, perhaps most important among them his presidential memoranda. These were the chief instruments he used to draw down the factious military into internal agreement on defense policy. Every spring they were bucked around the Pentagon to gather all comment on any military matter that should be laid, in all shades of opinions, before the President. "I wanted a vehicle—and President Kennedy was very interested in a vehicle—to acquaint him with the background on military decisions. But the more I thought about it, the more it seemed like a good device to get the views of appropriate departments for my own review. By passing these back and forth, we were able to force the divergent views to the surface. I insisted that each party of interest comment. Initially, of course, they wouldn't say red was red, because they were afraid we'd use it to say black was white." But eventually, according to one man high up on the buck sheet, these memoranda became "amazingly open and frank, and made clear what his decisions were, and why," so that there was some basis for the rest of what those 42 red-covered volumes contain.

### *His faith, from Toynbee, in history's verdict*

"They're far better sources than any personal memoirs," he insists. "They're written just as precisely"—his highest claim for any public paper—"as a lawyer's brief." Besides, he feels that only the years ahead—no present assessment, let alone his own—will decide the rightness of his decisions on nuclear strategy, pardon or condemn his own deep role in the bitter Vietnam war. "What's going to throw light on all this is the passage of time." He has a faith in the eventual verdict of history taken very much from Arnold Toynbee—another 10 volumes on the shelf, only at home—and sees, in his own Response to Challenge, at least the possibility of progress. "It's going to be very interesting

to see 10 years from now what the judgment will be," he allows, not without an inkling of optimism. Meanwhile, he has gone over to the World Bank—a job he certainly sought; but much more a job, as one close associate very carefully puts it, that, given enough time to consider, he might have wanted—leaving as his only apologia those bound volumes that he insists comprise the Essential, if not the Complete, McNamara.

It is, naturally enough, a highly factual work. He has always tried to be as factual as possible, right down to the number of tear gas canisters missing after the Pentagon demonstration—"There were nine we couldn't account for. The soldiers tell us they were stolen from them by the demonstrators"—and right up to the number of nuclear warheads with which the U.S. and Russia confront each other: 4,500 to 1,000. He even insisted on putting the relevant facts of his own private concerns clearly into the record. Way back during hearings on his confirmation, for instance, he told the Senate Armed Services Committee that, in order to resolve any conflict-of-interest problems, "I desire that my financial affairs be public property." He then proceeded to offer the senators so much say in the proper disposition of \$1.5 million from his Ford Motor Company holdings that, finally, the late Senator Styles Bridges scribbled a hasty note and sent it by Senate page to Gilpatrick: *For God's sake, tell him to stop making concessions!* Yet, for all his facts, for all his scrupulosity on the record, he still emerges from this monumental work of many hours and days as its chief unresolved character, an honored public servant whose private feelings and innermost commitments are the subject of almost perpetual speculation, as if not one of his facts really came near the personal truth about the man.

There has been, therefore, a wide polarization in the estimates of Robert Strange McNamara. If it was "McNamara's war" for a considerable time to the doves, it was also "McNamara's bombing pause"—those 37 days in 1965-66—to the hawks. And while he was long thought to be the indispensable man to the President, and is still deemed to be a close adviser, he has never ceased to be regarded as the inestimable friend to Senator Robert F. Kennedy—and more than proved himself such by allowing his testimony to Kennedy's "energy, courage, compassion and wisdom" to so obtrude on the Indiana primary campaign. He has been called a human com-

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## McNamara CONTINUED

puter so often that the remark itself sounds taped, yet he is also credited with an abiding, if tightly sealed, humanitarianism based on the deepest convictions about the worth of the individual. He is attacked as the man who hedged, or even lied, about the Gulf of Tonkin until the Senate Foreign Relations Committee found him out; but, likewise, as the man who carried a heavy burden of disillusionment and moral doubts about the Vietnam war during his last, attritive days at the Pentagon. He is tasked so many different ways that he almost disappears as a man among all the contradictory estimates of his character. How, for instance, can he possibly be the cold systematist of cost-effectiveness, the ultrarationalist, when, as Senator Robert F. Kennedy says, "all my sisters would rather sit next to him at dinner than anybody else"?

He has had sufficient of this nonsense by now to want to answer some of it directly himself, e.g., the accusation that he is nothing but a bloodless piece of intricate circuitry. "That just rubs me raw. I don't really believe in computers. When I was at Ford, I had a reputation for refusing to let them into my division. The idea that you need that much precision on most matters is absurd.

"All I'm trying to do is think precisely myself. I've got to think precisely. The cost of being wrong is very, very high. A conclusion has to be justified. You ought to be able to go back and see how you got there.

"I get emotional myself," he finally admits, "about the irrationality of the critics of reason."

He also sees little reason why his application of cost-effectiveness to military decisions should be considered such an organizational wonder. "That's nothing. I can do that with one hand tied behind my back. I'd been doing it for 15 years before I came here, and it ought to be expected of a man in this job.

"All it means is that you never put into an instrument more than is needed. Don't chrome-plate a crowbar. I'd be a damn fool to buy a professional carpenter's hammer to use myself around the house. Sears has built their business on this basis. Good, Better, Best. The real benefit it has is that it requires you—in order to decide Good, Better or Best—to define the job."

He recognizes that he is very much part of the "deep controversy" over the Vietnam war, but refuses to enter into any discussion of underlying moral issues. Publicly, all McNamara will say is



In Room 3E880 at the Pentagon, McNamara worked at two desks. The one at right was used by World War I General Pershing. Portrait at left is James Forrestal, first Defense Secretary.

that the justification for the war lies in the obligation to help certain Asian nations protect themselves from various internal and external encroachments, ultimately to be traced back to a potentially expansionist China. He has talked to all the non-Communist Asian leaders and accepts their judgments over any estimates of a differing mood within the vast Asian populace. "They all support us," he claims, referring at minimum to the American presence in Vietnam, "even though some of them have problems within their own countries that keep them from openly expressing themselves." He sides very much with the 14 eminent scholars—including former Ambassador to Japan Edwin O. Reischauer—who, while asking for a greater flexibility of approach, especially in the military effort, still spoke out last December in favor of a continuing U.S. presence in Asia. "I accept that philosophic statement. It says it much better than I can, gives a firm foundation to our commitment in Vietnam."

### *What hurt most: the epithet 'baby-burner'*

But, at the same time, he is acutely sensitive to what he calls "the stigma of Vietnam," both as it attaches to himself and as it affects the country. He has been encircled by demonstrators not just at the Pentagon but also in his car at Harvard and even out in the middle of Aspen Meadows, where some 70 protesters stood staring in at him through a picture window one summer afternoon as he ran from the shower to catch a ringing telephone. There have been several attempts to set fire to his rustic, lofty new home

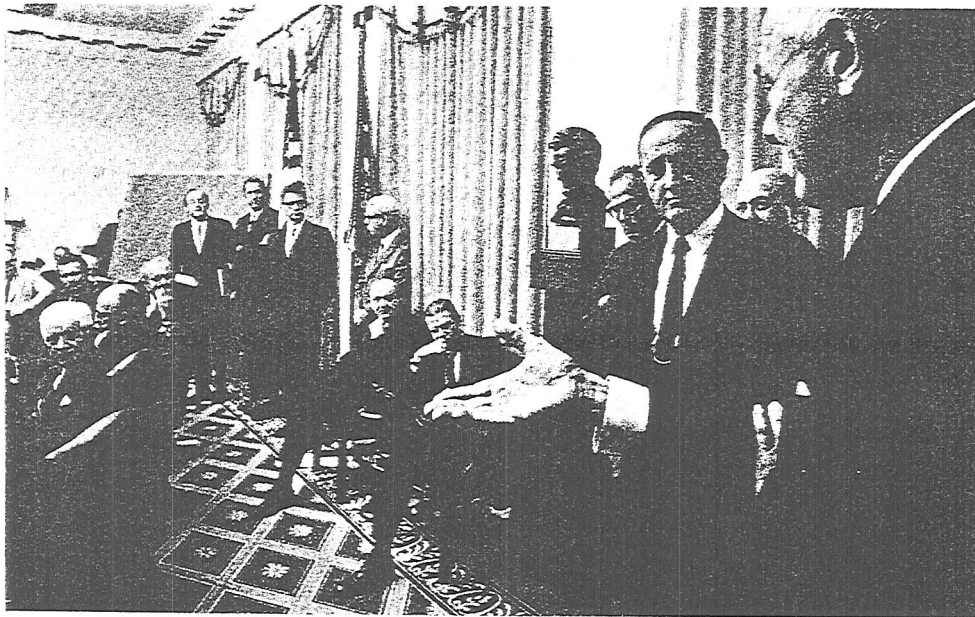
in Snowmass-at-Aspen, with clear notice that this was considered the justice due "a baby-burner," an epithet that particularly angers him. He came close to hitting somebody who hurled it at him once, but managed to remind himself that it only "reflected the basic tensions in the country." He worries a lot about these tensions, about the way the war and other harrowing issues have divided people so abrasively into opposing camps, though he believes that if people in general would bother to think a little bit historically, they'd realize matters have been far worse in the recent past. "They don't look back to the '30s. I don't know how it was in the rest of the country, but where I was, it was hell. Parents of my friends were committing suicide."

That, however, is as far as he's willing to expose his own thoughts on Vietnam. The really tough questions about the actual course of the war he declines to answer on the grounds that any discussion of them by him now only "raises a lot of imponderables." That is enough, if only barely enough, of an excuse to get him off the hook, but his real reason goes to something much deeper in his character: a precisely attuned, exactly measured, almost corporate sense of loyalty. Any personal comment he might make could conceivably cross a little off-slant with what the President has decided, and—since he has already had his chance to argue his own views in camera—he flatly will not allow that to happen. Not because the President is Lyndon Baines Johnson, not even really because the President is the President, but because the President has a paramount position in an organizational structure, is "the instrument we, the people, depend on for self-government." He talks about loyalty almost as

if it were an operational concept.

"To some degree, my view of loyalty is in the nature of a belief about how men move forward toward some objective. A group of people in any pursuit—a church or educational structure, for example—establishes an objective, and unless in effect each is loyal to the organization, the objective cannot be reached. If each begins to substitute his own judgment, you fragment and weaken the organization. It's far better to move together toward a reasonably acceptable goal than toward one just a few degrees off from it, on your own. That's how I would define loyalty. In the current situation, you have a President who was elected by the people, and I make it an absolute, fundamental rule that I am not going to shade my actions, either to protect myself or to try to move him."

As this kind of loyalist, he can be seen at his most adamant during any appearance before Congress, e.g., at the recent Tonkin Gulf hearings when he refused to admit a single point that might in any way undermine the Administration's originally stated objectives in seeking the Tonkin Gulf resolution. Under the most hostile questioning, he will not duck or redirect the pressure. "He's got his marching orders," says Jack L. Stempler, Assistant to the Secretary in charge of legislative affairs, "and he doesn't walk away because he's being beat on the head. I've never seen a man willing to take so much intemperate abuse, sometimes for a position I know he's already taken the opposite of." He continues loyal beyond his congressional testimony, even into his most private remarks.



For seven years, McNamara was at the center of the group that decided national policy. Here in White House Cabinet Room are (left to right against windows): Humphrey, Clark, Freeman, Goldberg, Rusk, McNamara, Wirtz, Gardner, Weaver and Lodge.

## McNamara CONTINUED

Cyrus Vance, another former Deputy Secretary and the closest adviser McNamara had in the Pentagon, has never heard him, for instance, say one word that would in any way distinguish working for President Kennedy from working for President Johnson. "It's something he would never discuss with anybody."

McNamara himself explains, "The moment you do it, your private remark doesn't stay private," and because he kept the strictest rein on himself during his time as Defense Secretary, he was able to carry on certain relationships that might otherwise have appeared disloyal, in particular with Bobby Kennedy.

In fact, McNamara's sudden public praise of Kennedy—which has brought him under harsh attack for breaking the nonpolitical tradition of his position with the World Bank—seems all the more surprising for being so out of character: It was Kennedy, "acting with his brother's consent, who did so much to organize the effort, monitor the results and assure the completion of work on which recommendations to the President were based." McNamara argues himself, however, that his comments on Kennedy's role in the 1961 Berlin crisis and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis amount to a reporting of the opinions and judgments of a close associate during times of stress already several years past—something quite different from an endorsement of a

candidate. But he admits he was not so naive as to believe his statements would not be used for political purposes, and moreover, emphasizes that he is not going to remain silent, given any appropriate opportunity, about any phase of his own seven-year effort to bring balance and reason into the use of force in a nuclear age. He clearly sees Kennedy as very much a partisan in this struggle, especially against right-wing cries for more tenuity in military posture, and chose, despite the possible indiscretion, to make Kennedy's contributions known. It was a risk taken for a close friend, one that seems to fit with Kennedy's own view of their ongoing attachment: "We'd been through a lot of trying experiences together, shared views that were similar, were allies during President Kennedy's administration. There is a bond that it would have been difficult to sever. Other people turned away from me to further their own positions whom I didn't expect would do it, but if he'd done it, if he'd been any different, I'd have been the most shocked person in the world."

### *His troubles with 'heresy' and 'higher loyalty'*

Yet it was really as much the policy as the friend that brought McNamara out of his self-imposed neutrality into this flirtation with politics. He has always been firm,

sometimes dogmatic, about the reasoned use of military power; in fact, as long as he had responsibility for its furtherance as the President's policy, he was inclined to consider any violation "a heresy." "Around Washington, there is this concept of 'the higher loyalty,'" he says with just an edge of contempt. "I think it's a heretical concept, this idea that there's a duty to serve the nation above the duty to serve the President, and that you're justified in doing so. It will destroy democracy if it's followed. You have to subordinate a part of yourself, a part of your views." And he was determined that the military, too readily inclined toward "end runs" to Congress in the name of "the higher loyalty," should especially adhere to his precepts.

"We slapped down awfully hard on that," he admits. "When I first got here, I had a top secret message from Dean Rusk on my desk one day. The next morning I opened up the newspaper, and there it was, paraphrased. I hadn't even had a chance to make up my mind about it. I thought I was the only one who had a copy, but there turned out to be a certain right to duplicate, an automatic distribution. So we traced it to one of the departments, sent out an investigative force, and disciplined the individual." He suffered other, far more divisive outbreaks of "heresy" during his seven years. General Curtis E. LeMay tried to convert all around him to his belief in the B-70, a follow-on bomber for the B-52, and, when even

the Joint Chiefs of Staff deserted him in favor of missiles, went so far with Congress that he eventually had to be excommunicated. The Navy was in a more or less constant state of apostasy, particularly over the TFX, a swing-wing airplane that was supposed to have "commonality" for both Navy and Air Force use; it presently exists in its Navy version as the F-111B, still to take off from a carrier, a heavy item to be weighed, at \$9 million per plane, against McNamara's reputation for infallibility. And finally, there was the gradual falling away of CINCPAC, a kind of "little Pentagon" out in Hawaii, with charge of prosecuting the air war in North Vietnam, that created the first visible schism in Vietnam strategy by its open challenge last summer to his restrictions on bombing certain targets. But except for the unfortunate rancor of this last dispute, which left its pall over his own departure, McNamara managed to put down heresy better than any previous Secretary and assert the ultimate supremacy of his own office.

It would be a mistake, however—and one too often made by his critics—to consider McNamara merely a soulless organizer. He sees no point at all in system with-

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As the American flag brushed the back of his head, young Robert McNamara, then 8, posed intently for this fourth-grade class picture at Lakeview grammar school in Oakland, Calif.



### **McNamara** CONTINUED

out deep purpose, and actually, the more human that purpose, the more attracted he is to the task of organization. He admits, for instance, to a considerable interest in the administrative and organizational techniques that the churches of the world use to carry on their traditions. "I was just fascinated by Pope John's experience—how this man came into this organization, the tremendous difficulties he had," McNamara says. He is Presbyterian himself—though in a way that "would probably shock my fellow Presbyterians: my religion is more a doctrine of ethics, a belief in the relationship of man to man"—but he can still understand, even perhaps envy, the size of the late Pope's organizational challenge. "Imagine what would have happened if the Church had united behind him to modify the objectives some 200 years old," he says, with some relish. In a like way, his own search after proper organization is something of a questing, and he speaks, for all his rationalism, in almost fervid terms about bringing men together to work toward an immensity of purpose that can only be selflessly, i.e., institutionally, realized. "We," he says, "and I use 'we' advisedly. It has been 'we.' You have to have an 'I,' but it's really been 'we.'"

### *J.F.K. said: there are no schools for Presidents*

He used to have a packet of file cards in the upper-right-hand drawer of that Pershing desk, all the jottings and leads he'd taken down about the people he eventually brought to the Pentagon. Wrapped up in a green rubber band, those notes on various men's individual abilities represented for him the real underpinnings of the organizational structure he finally built. "It all came out of that second conversation with President

Kennedy, and those first two weeks, and"—tapping the cards—"these." The second conversation followed his initial refusal to take the secretaryship because "I felt unqualified, I really did." But when Kennedy asked him to reconsider—after all, Kennedy pointed out, there weren't any schools to qualify Presidents either—he acquiesced, and returned to Washington, exacting only one condition: absolute authority in his choice of people. Kennedy agreed to stand behind him on that, and he set himself up in a suite full of telephones at the Shoreham Hotel for the next two weeks. "I just stayed on that damn phone until I had the people I wanted," he recalls. "I was looking for intelligence, experience and wisdom. It's a very dangerous proposition, hiring people you don't know. So I went to the highest categories of people, where there'd already been some automatic selecting-out"—e.g., heads of the Rand Corporation, the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at Livermore, et al., often as not former Rhodes Scholars. By the time he was done, he had assembled a group that, largely to a man, stayed with him through the seven years, moved from job to job with intellectual ease and administrative versatility, and developed a disciplined, canny, preemptive way of thinking that settled, hopefully forever, the question of civilian control. "I don't think any President or Secretary is going to take it from now on when a military man comes in and says, 'This must be done,'" one of them concludes. "From now on, he's going to ask, 'Why?'"

McNamara used these men very personally, scouting them all around the Pentagon to bring the various services and agencies into mesh with his own office and, later, to repair any organizational breakdown. Nitze, for instance, started out as Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, then suddenly became Secretary of the Navy when a near scandal broke around Fred Korth, and finally ended up as Deputy Sec-

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In 1943, McNamara left teaching post at Harvard Business School for the Air Force, where he set up a revolutionary statistical control program. He was discharged as a lieutenant colonel in 1946.

**McNamara** CONTINUED

retary of Defense. Dr. Harold Brown went from Director of Defense Research and Engineering to Secretary of the Air Force. Vance moved from General Counsel to Secretary of the Army to Deputy Secretary of Defense. It was one way that McNamara met his initial fear that 50% of his trouble was going to be an inability, within that maze, to pin responsibility on anyone. He had his own lines out through these people and, quite typical of his approach—no matter where he had Vance in the organization—if there was civil disorder, Vance and Joe Califano—no matter where Califano was—were put in charge of preventing riot.

*Instead of massive  
retaliation,  
flexible response*

He wanted people, too, who could understand and help realize new policies that were oriented broadly around the entire defense establishment, not just around particular jobs. The defense budget, for instance, had long been crudely handled at the Pentagon, particularly during the Eisenhower era, as an already baked pie (from the Bureau of the Budget) to be sliced up hungrily, often sloppily, by the three services. Massive retaliation was the only doctrine that economically survived—making the Air Force, in Secretary Brown's words, "the single arm of American foreign policy"—much to the despair of some, like Nitze, who saw the clearest requirements for conventional forces—i.e., in case of a Berlin crisis or an incursion into Southeast Asia. McNamara, seeking exactly these alternatives through a policy of flexible response, wanted the question of military posture taken out from under budgetary dictation. "He had this one basic view that the nation could afford what was needed for national defense," Nitze explains. "He was very hard-nosed about each segment, but

not in terms of any absolute ceiling."

But this involved an entire re-vamping of the way moneys would be spent, so McNamara brought in Charles J. Hitch of the Rand Corporation as his new Comptroller, to realign the budget around missions instead of services. In other words, money would go, for example, into the hardening of missiles from funds specifically earmarked Strategic Forces, and not into two experimental fighters for the Navy and two experimental fighters for the Air Force. "In the spring of 1961, I went to him with these plans," Hitch remembers. "I had a general schema that I estimated would take a full year to develop on a department-wide basis. I suggested a trial run, some selected programs, that we see what resulted and begin a whole program next year. He said, 'That's fine, but we'll do it all this year.'" Hitch shakes his head over how "very, very crude and rough" that first five-year plan had to be. "It just meant a hell of a lot of quick, arbitrary decisions, but I've never seen a man so hard to discourage; and, in the end, he was right."

The new defense plans required an additional \$10 to \$12 billion a year—even before the huge expenditures began for the Vietnam war—but that rise would have gone even higher without McNamara's stiff cost-reduction program and his stern insistence on standardization. The cost-reduction program has now saved some \$15 billion, going into its seventh year. And the single Defense Supply Agency has stopped such absurdities as competing service versions of a butcher's smock or 27 pages of specifications for a 10¢ washcloth that will do for only one service. Here and there, however, an item has managed to escape him. "He never was able to achieve a single standard on belt buckles," says one of McNamara's

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supply people. Three services wear brass, but the Marines continue to paint theirs black. "And I think it still frustrates him."

Cost figures certainly did permeate defense thinking during his secretaryship, but in a way that has never been quite fairly understood. Mathematical analysis is a refinement in human judgment, not an abdication to the computers. "With a nonquantitative approach to nuclear strategy, you get a lot of words about the Red menace," points out Dr. Alain Enthoven, now Assistant Secretary for Systems Analysis, "but when you begin talking about how to spend \$1 billion on ICBMs, the words don't help you much."

### How 175 Russian divisions came down to 27

One good example of a quantitative solution—which did indeed help straighten out a lot of defense thinking—is the way in which Dr. Enthoven sharply reduced those 175 Russian divisions, supposedly all set to overrun Europe, by simply costing them out. "Why is it, I asked myself, that we're always paying more and enjoying it less than the Russians?" He calculated that to equip 175 divisions on anything like the U.S. scale, the Russians would have to spend over \$17 billion a year, more than the U.S. was spending on all kinds of military procurement in the early 1960s. So the NATO strategists admitted that maybe some of those Russian divisions were on paper, that only 80 were actually ready to overrun Europe. Then Dr. Enthoven came up with the "people paradox." "I used to beat up on the CIA with this one: If 960,000 troops in the U.S. Army came to only 16 divisions, how was it that 2 million Russian troops came to 80 divisions?" Finally Enthoven suggested that somebody find out how much it would cost to "buy" a Russian division—manpower, equipment, transportation, support, etc.—and it turned out that three complete Russian divisions could be "bought" for the price of one U.S. division. That brought the Russians down to 27 "combat-available division-forces," which began to make sense. "It took years to penetrate the fog, but it gradually emerged that we could get to an equilibrium in Europe," Dr. Enthoven says. "Nobody had bothered to look into this before. You're terribly naive," they'd tell me. McNamara, of course, saw the right an-

swer right off. He was just waiting for the dialectic to work it out."

Moreover, McNamara was most willing to calculate "the unused potential of the Department of Defense" and to project that force rehabilitatively into "the solution of the social problems wracking our nation" through such programs as Project 100,000—a deliberate lowering of the educational standards to allow that many of the marginally educated to benefit from the armed services' numberless training programs each year. "McNamara has said that the actions of the Department of Defense have resulted in more inroads on poverty than any program labeled 'poverty,'" explains Alfred B. Fitt, Assistant Secretary for Manpower. "Any department which administers 10% of the gross national product, with influence over the lives of 10 million people, is bound to have an impact. The question is whether it's going to be a dumb, blind impact, or a marshaled and ordered impact."

"McNamara wanted to marshal that impact by committing defense resources to social goals that were still compatible with the primary mission of security. In fact, he felt this was wholly justified by the military situation; that, for instance, there was a requirement for open housing because, in this man's Army, the least of these was entitled to the same as the most of these."

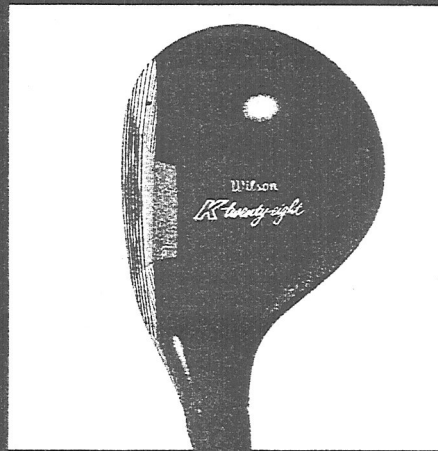
McNamara blames himself for not having followed up hard enough on open housing until 1966, when he pressed Vance to begin surveys and establish goals, particularly around the Washington, D.C., area. The real estate agents near military installations have begun to break down, but he still feels he mistakenly let a directive go too long without a check-up on results.

Results. Tangible, measurable results. That is what McNamara expected, demanded from all these endeavors—"He has no patience with programs where the results are lost," says one of his staff—keeping on top of the department by working a six-, sometimes seven-day week that was budgeted down as fine as the next 10 minutes between 7:15 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. That is, in part, what saved him, what kept him still functioning after seven years, a rigid schedule that he only varied to accommodate the President "He's an extraordinary man," said Under Secretary of the Army David E. McGiffert, "but even an extraordinary man couldn't have done it without this strict discipline of himself."

Yet, now that he is gone, there

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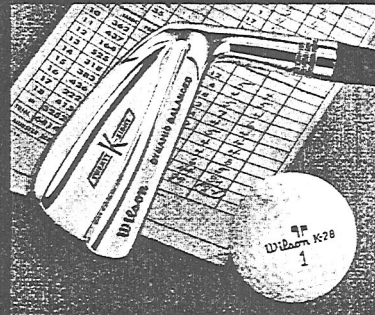
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McNamara CONTINUED

arises that hard question as to just how much this extraordinary man really did manage to do, how lasting a change, beyond this restructuring of the department for greater efficiency, he actually wrought upon the country's military establishment. Within the military, the goals for action in Vietnam now lift perilously toward the prevention of World War III in Southeast Asia, kept down only by the President's political sensitivity in this difficult election year. Even discussion of nuclear strategy begins to move away from his own calculated acceptance of "parity" with the Russians to some catastrophic dream of "superiority" over the Russians. Do his seven years of cautionary, rational authority—often, despite Vietnam, exercised toward a lessening of tensions, toward peace—amount to yet another example of the vanity, however impersonally disguised, of human wishes?

Perhaps this is some reason why the strategy of restraint was so immediately on his mind during his last days behind that Pershing desk. "That would have been the subject of my next speech," he eventually admitted. His whole thought, his inner resolve rest upon that one particular conviction: that overwhelming force must always be available, but that force itself must be exercised with restraint. "I don't know whether I needed the Bay of Pigs to teach it to me, but after that, I certainly understood it." He blames that ill-fated adventure on "a complete misappraisal of the situation," and, to a considerable extent, on himself personally. "I didn't know the facts."

*The Bay of Pigs—  
'a complete  
misappraisal'*

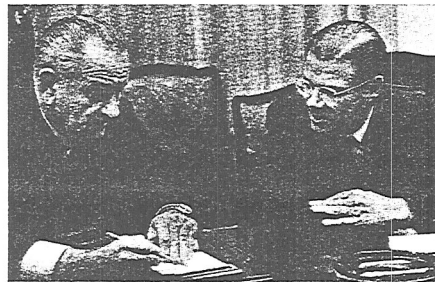
The failure of the invasion made bitterly clear to him the necessity for always having that overwhelming force available. Without it, there is simply no possibility of continued action, no opportunity for applying force one step at a time—realistic, precisely understood, and limited. However, in the particular case of the Cuban invasion, he has even a further objection, on moral grounds. "I wouldn't have done it at all. What was wrong from the beginning was a large country associating itself with an effort to overthrow the government of a smaller country."

In varying ways, he attempted to apply this strategy of overwhelming power applied with restraint to every crisis he faced,



McNamara served two Presidents with equal tight-lipped loyalty. Pictured in New York (above) before his inauguration, Kennedy

persuaded McNamara to leave Ford. After Kennedy's death, he became Johnson's adviser. Below they talk in Cabinet Room.



even the demonstration at the Pentagon. "We had an overwhelming force, 3,000 troops that nobody knew were here, behind the only door the demonstrators might enter," he says. "But then this is the restraint. When the troops moved out, they only used the pressure of their bodies. Not one rifle was loaded, not one bayonet was fixed. And the way I know they didn't fix bayonets," he adds, a little imperiously, "is that I stood there at the window and saw that they didn't."

The missile crisis was undoubtedly his most successful application of this strategy, but perhaps his most dramatic advocacy of it came earlier, during the Berlin crisis in 1961. Bobby Kennedy still remembers with some awe a meeting of a subcommittee of the National Security Council right after Dean Acheson returned from Germany. "It was quite a confrontation. Here was Acheson with all this experience, the acknowledged expert, arguing for a massive involvement. Then McNamara came forward with the most brilliant exposition I've ever heard for taking certain steps but leaving our options open. I don't mean that Acheson's arguments were completely defeated. We were all somewhat uncertain at the time. But McNamara had the forcefulness, the method of argument that most impressed President Kennedy. McNamara, of course, knew the possible weaknesses of his own

position, but he was still strong for restraint because it gave us more maneuverability."

McNamara's insistence on restraint borders on a passion; and it may, in fact, arise from a particular passion, seldom admitted, that Mrs. John F. Kennedy even suggests is guiding. "Peace. That's all he cares for," she insists after having known him quite some time now. "Here he was, supposed to amalgamate this seething furnace, run the greatest war machine in the world, and all that he really cared about was that it was never used." The womanly exaggeration in these words shouldn't diminish their import. Nothing in McNamara's stern, machinate public manner may give much hint of this state of mind. He is so competitive, so determined to obliterate all opposition in any public debate that it's easy to mistake him for a total belligerent. But he is only really aggressive in pure argument, in realms of abstraction where, as he says, "we're not dealing with two nuclear powers." Otherwise, he has spent much of these past seven years searching for honorable ways to climb down and away from the actual threat of nuclear holocaust. This is what a lot of his aggressive debating has been all about.

"The test ban," he remarks, giving some hint at last of this inward conviction, "was one of the greatest achievements of President Kennedy. Partly for itself, and part-

ly for the further chance it's given us to stop arms proliferation. I doubt if we would have had an offer from the Russians for a limitation on strategic nuclear arms without the test ban. And I don't think we've heard the final word from them on that either. Over the next five or ten years things could change. I feel the test ban affected security favorably for decades."

It was also, ironically, his own greatest personal achievement within the Pentagon. "He couldn't do it just by ukase and decree," Gilpatric points out. "He had to use persuasion, education." McNamara says himself that he spent "hours and hours, days and days and days" with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "dissecting the test ban in the minutest detail."

"The key to getting the treaty approved," he admits, "was getting the Chiefs on board. We went over every single argument, insisting that once a premise was destroyed, the argument be given up." If the Chiefs said they were afraid the Russians would hide a bomb test underground, experts were brought in to say just how big, how deep, how impossible the hole would have to be to accomplish that. He also took on the Chiefs separately before he took them on together, and won an early and "most unexpected ally" in General David Shoup, commandant of the Marine Corps. Then, according to Gilpatric, "by setting up the safeguard program—keeping the whole testing apparatus intact on a stand-by basis, and conducting specific war games to be sure the know-how was kept up—he got the Chiefs with him."

"There is a tremendous lesson in this," McNamara comments. "Whenever you move into arms limitation, you enter into new risks, but you also give up old risks. Here, the danger to health, to unborn generations, even the danger of the Russians narrowing the gap by testing. What led the Chiefs to support the ban was a full examination of these and other alternative risks."

Still, McNamara himself approached the ban as "an article of faith," again according to Gilpatric. "He was the prime mover, the mastermind. But he was very careful not to become visible. This time he was the *éminence grise*, where he was usually the principal spokesman." Perhaps because sponsoring a test ban, often in an alignment that set the Defense Department and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency against the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of State, might seem "a curious role for the war minister."

The exercise of a restraining veto over new weapons systems

CONTINUED

## McNamara CONTINUED

might seem an even more curious role for the war minister, but McNamara summarily rid defense plans of the B-70, Skybolt, Dyna-Soar and many other monsters of the various services' imaginings. He was much criticized for these excisions, especially for letting down the British by the cancellation of Skybolt. But actually, his clear eye for future obsolescence and immediate infeasibility benefited the country's military posture as much as its budget. "A newly proposed airplane," one of his service secretaries says, "had to do something besides just be an aircraft. It had to be not just desirable, but usable." The only decisions of this sort that have returned to haunt him are those made in connection with the TFX. His insistence on "commonality" for the swing-wing plane and the choice of General Dynamics over Boeing as contractor have been the subjects of persistent and unsatisfied congressional inquiry. But he maintains that "commonality is the trend of the future, no amount of investigation can turn it back," and points to the Navy-developed fighter that was converted successfully into the Air Force's present F-4. (However, "it may be easier," as Hitch says, "to adapt a Navy plane to Air Force use than an Air Force plane to Navy use.")

As for the runaway costs of the F-111, these simply reemphasize to McNamara "the weak basis on which major decisions about new weapons are made by the services in the first place," allowing eventual production costs to run 300% to 1,000% higher than initial estimates. Both Navy and the Air Force, he argues, reported that either Boeing or General Dynamics was acceptable—in evaluative studies that he found largely worthless—so that he finally had to make his choice not on cost-effectiveness but on the most general judgment as to which version of the TFX was less advanced, the least experimental, and therefore held the most promise of economy. One of his last acts as Secretary was to press for a complete revision of the services' inadequate evaluative methods, believing strongly that "an intelligent choice of new weapons systems must originate in the services."

But though the controversy over the TFX lingers on—indeed is raised anew by the disturbing losses of F-111As in Vietnam—it is nothing compared to the doubts that still linger over the war itself. That is where his strategy of restraint has been brought into the most question. It is perhaps the ultimate irony of his long secretaryship that the organizational mir-



Despite arguments with brass, McNamara worked well with General Earle Wheeler, head of Joint Chiefs. Here they are at a Senate hearing.

acle he worked at the Pentagon made possible the huge troop commitments that have now pushed the war to a point where it must either move to the negotiating table for settlement or move beyond all his past restraints and limitations into an open, possibly general conflict with all the dangers of a nuclear exchange. Back in the fall of 1965, he mounted a logistical operation that moved 100,000 men across to Vietnam in less than four months' time, a commanding achievement that backed up what he admits was "a major decision." "It was very clear we either had to do that, or accept defeat." But that very increase in troop strength brought the U.S. presence up to the level that soon enough resulted in the Americanization of the conflict. He could still insist, correctly, that no army had ever been as strictly controlled as the forces in Vietnam. He could continue to watch the flow of ammunition so closely that at one point last winter he sent an Assistant Secretary to Saigon one weekend to handle a potential surplus that seemed to be piling up on the docks. But after the Vietcong's Tet offensive last January, that kind of control ceases to carry much impression of command over a confusing and deteriorating situation.

He undoubtedly depended too much, at least in the beginning, on a belief that he could quantify the difficulties. He trusted early figures on the progress of the war that were falsely optimistic; and then, after the collapse of Diem's regime, came uncomfortably to understand that politics, not statistics, would be controlling. "He'd hoped politics would be less of a factor than it was," says one of his service Secretaries. "Political things are less calculable than military things, and he was frustrated because politics isn't amenable to his kind of numerical analysis." This points back to an original weakness that he brought with him to the job, despite all his strengths.

"McNamara had to learn a lot about foreign policy," one Pentagon official admits. "His initial approach to Laos, for instance, was to ask for a plan. He soon learned you might have a plan, but you didn't necessarily have control." McNamara's own recognition of this can be sensed in an offhand remark he is reported to have made to the press up in Montreal: "I'm beginning to understand foreign relations. You can take the Edsel off the market overnight, but you can't do that with Charles de Gaulle."

Nevertheless, of late, at least within the government, "He always tried to face situations," according to another service Secretary. "His private predictions have been accurate. Maybe more pessimistic than some, but he's been correct."

### *The pause that put his influence on the line*

Another Pentagon official, very close to him, says the war became "an extremely heavy burden to him. It consumed him night and day. He was desperately concerned where this was leading the country. He felt the course we were following was in a large part his doing, that the inability to make progress was a responsibility which he personally bore. He read every book and major article there was around. He used to try to get people in with all different points of view, often quite contrary to the views of the Administration."

Eventually he put his influence behind the bombing pause that lasted 37 days into 1966. When that pause failed to produce any response from Hanoi that the Administration cared to acknowledge, he no longer went unchallenged among those who offered the President the closest counsel on the war. "I wish there were no

disputes," reflects General Earle C. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, philosophically, "but I don't believe that this Elysian situation will ever be achieved." He denies, however, that there was ever a split between the Chiefs and McNamara over anything as clear-cut or resolute as "taking a harder line." "I don't think that exactly describes it. The Chiefs had no desire to widen the war, invade contiguous countries, take on China, or any of that stuff. It was more a question of tempo. The Chiefs would have done things faster. They didn't coincide with McNamara on the conduct of the air war."

It is almost too classic and fateful to find McNamara coming to the end of his career as Defense Secretary at a moment of dispute over air power. Since World War II, when he was commissioned into the Air Force out of a statistical course he was teaching at the Harvard Business School, he has been critical, on the strictest analytical grounds, of the effectiveness of bombing. It all goes back to a time, during his service with the 20th Air Force, when General LeMay "was God," and he himself had a sizable respect for the man. "He could define the task better than anybody else. Almost every other bomber commander could tell you how high he flew, how many bombs he'd dropped, but not a damn one of them could tell you how many targets he'd destroyed." McNamara particularly recalls an incident out in Guam after LeMay, finding the new B-29s ineffective at 20,000 feet, took them down to 7,000 feet. "I remember it so well. After a mission, the lead crews were brought in for a critique, and this one captain got up and said, 'All I know is some son of a bitch ordered us down to 7,000 feet, and I've flown 30 missions without losing a wing man, but I lost my wing man in the first 30 seconds.' Then he sat down. You could have heard a pin drop. LeMay had flown many, many missions. He was known as the sternest man in the Air Force and he didn't take that kind of talk. But he answered in a very soft voice, 'Captain, what you should be asking yourself is, how many wing men did you lose in relation to the number of targets you destroyed?'"

That is exactly the sort of question concerning effectiveness that McNamara continually asked himself about the air war in Vietnam.

CONTINUED

## McNamara CONTINUED

"I've spent a good many years thinking about bombing. The case for tactical bombing is much more complex than the case for strategic bombing. There's very little high-quality analytical work been done on it, and unproven principles are accepted as truths. The evidence is that it cannot prevent the movement of military personnel and supplies in a situation such as the one we face in North Vietnam. In any event, it is clear that the raids have not significantly reduced the flow of materials into South Vietnam. I myself believe the problem of tactical warfare has not been properly studied. Otherwise, how can honest individuals be so far apart on it?"

The honest individuals he was disputing were mostly out in Hawaii at CINCPAC, and McNamara seems almost convinced that if he'd only had them there in the Pentagon . . . "We didn't do with tactical bombing what we did with the test ban. If you're dealing with intelligent, honest people and can get them around a table, tear the arguments apart; if you take enough time . . . but it takes a hell of a lot of time." And already the Senate Armed Services

Committee had started an investigation into such questions as why Haiphong had not been bombed. McNamara made a finely reasoned case for his own position on Aug. 25, reducing the dispute, quite correctly, to some 57 largely negligible targets that, on various sensible grounds, had not been authorized for strike. But when he was asked why there appeared to be such disagreement between himself and the military over the value of certain targets, he answered from reverberating depths of character:

"We come from different backgrounds and different experiences. . . . I am not at all impressed by [the military value of] a tire plant that produces 30 tires a day. I am not at all impressed by a national so-called steel capacity which doesn't produce any steel at all and produces only something on the order of 5,000 tons of pig iron a month. I would have lost that in the backroom of what I considered a relatively small pig iron production capacity in River Rouge. . . .

"So these are negligible industrial facilities, and frankly I am not prepared to recommend that we lose American lives in taking them out. Maybe some others are.

They have the authority to make the judgment. If they do, I will follow it without question, but I am not prepared to recommend it."

## L.B.J.'s first hard thoughts about McNamara

His was not really harrowing testimony, but it still upset the President enough to cause him to think, however unwillingly, his first hard thoughts about McNamara. The Secretary was certainly the irreplaceable public servant, but with an election year coming up this kind of stalwart performance—stubbornly embattled, always honest at the wrong moment, never yielding at the right moment—could become a political liability. McNamara had already asked to go to the World Bank, and three months after these hearings, much to everybody's surprise, including the Secretary's, his appointment was discovered to be on its way to quick approval. But it is only fair to add that McNamara had previously asked at least one person at the White House to assure the President that he truly wanted the job, that the President and his

Secretary continued to work in the closest harmony until McNamara's departure in February, in particular on what McNamara would say in his testimony on the Gulf of Tonkin, and that he continues to advise the President privately, e.g., on the announcement of the recent bombing pause in Vietnam.

Actually, the irony is that McNamara stayed far longer as Secretary than he ever intended; and, in doing so, lost his chance at the one job he might have preferred to the presidency of the World Bank. "There is an optimum period," he says about length of service, "after which the tension and strife cause you to become physically tired, mentally sterile. I felt before I came to the department that this time would come in about five years." He smiles. "I haven't changed my mind since." Back in late 1965, toward the end of that five years, he was approached about becoming head of a large foundation. It was an ideal post, given his need for both an escape hatch and a large challenge; but in the end, he stayed at the Pentagon, frankly "because the President asked me to, in a time of emergency." He continued to "survive" his responsibilities—"It's your attitude toward the day's

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¼ cup sugar	1 baked 8-inch pie shell, cooled	Prepared Dream Whip®
¼ teaspoon salt		Whipped Topping
½ cup water		Fresh red cherries
2 teaspoons lemon juice		
1 can (1 lb.) pitted red sour cherries		

Combine pie filling mix, sugar, salt, water and lemon juice in a saucepan; blend into a smooth paste. Add cherries and cherry liquid. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture comes to a full boil. Remove from heat; stir in butter and food coloring. Cool 5 minutes. Pour into pie shell. Cool until firm—at least 3 hours. Garnish with lattice design of prepared whipped topping and cherries.



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Mountains draw the McNamaras. In Switzerland in 1963, he rests at the foot of the Matterhorn with son Craig (at his right), his wife Marg, center, and friends.

## McNamara CONTINUED

events, entirely your own psychology, that keeps psychic distress minimized"—but definitely felt he was working "at a reduced rate of creativity." Also, his wife became ill with an ulcer that he couldn't help thinking by rights should have been his; and he began to tell friends that he'd never felt "so beleaguered, so besieged, so beset"—but still, as they note, with a smile. "And if he'd been in that citadel when the campaign came . . ." one of them shakes his head. "You know, he's going to lick all the hostility by sundown."

So his appointment to the World Bank came, if not precisely at the best moment, certainly at a saving moment; and the work he will be doing on international development most appropriately suits his deepest convictions about world problems. As usual, he expresses them with the least philosophy, in the most operational terms: "Each human being has a potential that I think too many never have an opportunity to realize. Each child is born with an essentially equal biological heritage; and, unfortunately, that's about the last moment he or she ever is equal. It's a matter of environments. I want to affect those environments. And I believe that if we don't affect those environments, if the leaders of the world don't begin to move in this direction, whole nations, whole peoples are going to be lost to the future."

He doesn't even say "improve." Only "affect."

But at this late date in his public career, perhaps McNamara shouldn't be allowed to vanish himself so readily into this operational mode; though, without doubt, its protections—efficiency, concision and the sparest reasoning—are deeply ingrained. "Cal-

vinistic," he even says himself. As a student at Berkeley, living at home in Oakland, Calif., he used to allow himself a few more minutes of sleep in the morning by waiting until exactly 10 minutes of eight to head for class. By arrangement, his mother would be standing at the front door with his entire breakfast—a glass of orange juice with an egg blended into it—which he'd gulp down with hardly a break in stride. A fellow student remembers, "He never seemed to give the idea that he was that much smarter than I was, but one time I wrote half a blue book on a question and got a B-plus, and then I saw his answer was barely half a page and straight A." Even his wife says she is still learning habits of time-saving and self-discipline from him. "He's gotten me along to a point now where at least I don't open the mail twice." Once a letter is out of its envelope, it stays out of its envelope. But, really, there are other ways to see the man.

*Always taking  
the trail marked  
'most difficult'*

Against a mountain, for instance. "What President Kennedy used to get from the sea." Mrs. Kennedy shrewdly observes, "he gets from the mountains." He skis magnificently, and hard, hard, down "the Slot," down "the Big Burn," down all the trails marked with a blue triangle as Most Difficult, and hikes through the Rockies, the Sierras, the Olympics, even the Alps with large family parties, always determined on that last extra push. "Dad," one of his daugh-

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## McNamara CONTINUED

ters came to him, elated, after a day's climbing last summer. "I extended myself today." That's the proudest moment, the whole point anyhow; and at 51 he extends, renews himself, winter and summer, by pitting his strength and wit against the sheer physical challenge of all out-of-doors. "He's always had that in him," says Dr. Willard Goodwin, often his companion on these outings. "That adventure."

When he was younger, it several times sent him to sea. He used to ship out of San Francisco during his summer vacations as a provisional ordinary seaman, "the lowest of the low." He got his first berth when he was 17, aboard a merchantman bound through the Panama Canal for New York City. "I did the jobs nobody else would take, got 25 bedbug bites, and lost 20 pounds." After Berkeley, in 1937, he and Goodwin decided to sail around the world together before they headed east for graduate school. "Typical of McNamara," says Goodwin, "he kept very close track of all the sailings we could take and still get back in time." But they passed the point in the summer when they any longer could, and signed on board the *President Hoover* which took them all over the Far East, even up the Yangtze River to wartime Shanghai. "One peaceful afternoon, we were both half asleep in our bunks, when the ship was bombed," Goodwin goes on. "We ran up on deck in time to see the first mate shooting at dive-bombers with a rifle. Everybody thought it was the Japanese, but it turned out to be the Chinese making a mistake." McNamara has his own rum stories from these voyages—how, for instance, he smuggled his girl friend's brother on board at San Pedro, Calif., to run him back up the coast in time to register at Stanford University, and "damned if the crew didn't pull a 16-day sitdown strike." And he starts laughing at himself with a warm, wide-breaking grin that, the first time it happens, comes so suddenly, all Irish, that it almost seems primeval.

In fact, this hidden Irish warmth—the "Mick in him" that goes back to a grandfather emigrating to Boston from Cork, to a father crossing the Isthmus of Panama on muleback to get to California—runs deep as a bog stream under all his coldly rational veneer. Perhaps the best instance of this depth of feeling is the effect that Kennedy's assassination has had upon him. All he will say, as usual, is that it was "a blow." But he has kept an unbending eye on the grave site over at Arlington Na-

tional Cemetery—"Hell," says one Assistant Secretary, "I used to keep track for him of how closely they mowed the grass over there"—and it is known that he wishes to be buried there himself, in an eventual arrangement that will allow all those who served in his Cabinet, if they so choose, to be interred beside President Kennedy. And he was clearly a godsend to Mrs. Kennedy in the days after the funeral.

## His poets— Shelley, Kipling, especially Yeats

After a brief stay at the home of Ambassador Averell Harriman, Mrs. Kennedy had moved across the street into a new home in Georgetown, and thence into a bleak depression. There were some days apparently when she didn't even leave her bed. So McNamara and General Maxwell D. Taylor put together a kindly plot. "On alternate Tuesdays, one or the other would come and have tea with me. It meant that I had to get up and do something, at least order the tea. It was almost painful going through it, but you had to and somehow it began to reattach you to life." She says herself it must have been heavy going for them, but McNamara really has many things, besides percentages, to which he can turn a conversation. Poetry, for instance, Shelley and Kipling and especially Yeats. Moreover, he is talking from considerable knowledge. On the table behind that Pershing desk, right along with the books by Bernard Fall on Vietnam, he always had a copy of Yeats's *Collected Poems*, and he doesn't just turn to the familiar ones like "The Second Coming." "Do you know that poem 'A Prayer for My Daughter'?" he asked one day. "I love that one. I read it at my own daughter's bridal dinner last year."

"He said now is when you must use your friends," Mrs. Kennedy continues. "He was determined he was going to watch over President Kennedy's children for their father. He wants them to know all the wonderful things their father did." One of McNamara's own treasures was the pen Kennedy had given him after signing the treaty for the test ban. "He gave it to John for his birthday, and explained all about what it was, what it stood for."

This caring, this inner availability to profound emotion helps explain why McNamara, for all his burnished-steel public surface, has been so fondly regarded by close associates, and most especially, President Kennedy. "It was a more

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## McNamara CONTINUED

formal relationship than some," says Bobby, "but President Kennedy liked and admired him more than anybody else in the Cabinet. He would certainly have made him his next Secretary of State. And although it was a long way away, he thought McNamara had the ability and courage someday to be President. The elements that McNamara was missing, President Kennedy balanced. They had characteristics that were properly complementary. And I know this; as tired as he is—and I know how tired he is—he still made a better Secretary of Defense than anyone else rested."

### *A love of public service—but on an Olympian level*

This would seem to impose some sort of political future upon McNamara, but that is not at all the way he sees it himself at the moment. Even after the flurry over his praise of Kennedy, he still maintains that he will play no political role, that those remarks are the full extent of his active involvement, unless criticism of his own policies revives. Indeed, he seems to want to fit into public dimensions that lie outside, perhaps even beyond, politics. There is an immense love of public service in him, but only on more Olympian levels, far above office-seeking, at great scale and scope. Once, dur-

ing their days together in the East, Willard Goodwin remembers a visit that McNamara made to see him down at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, much disillusioned at the time with his own possible future as an accountant. "I envy you," he said to Goodwin. "You're doing something constructive. I'd like to do that." Then, Goodwin recalls, he thought a moment. "But not just treating patients. Some kind of world medicine." Goodwin sees this as the true sign of his ambition and reach: "Many, many people is what he likes to deal with."

It recalled another day, back in Room 3E880 of the Pentagon, when he happened to be passing by a table near the Pershing desk on which lay two bits of weaponry. One was a starlight scope, the very latest attachment for sighting the enemy at night down a gun barrel. The other was a Bronze Age sword presented to him by Premier Levi Eshkol of Israel. He picked up the sword and pointed with it at the starlight scope. "You know, there's practically 3,000 years between these two weapons, but if you look at the civilizations behind them, there's really not that much difference. What is the appropriate form of government for a backward nation, or for any civilization?"

I suggested that might be just the kind of problem on which he would soon be working.

That seemed to satisfy him, except on one small point. "Work," he said, setting down the knife again, and he was obviously looking very much forward to not being too long without employment—"work is a misnomer."

At World Bank, McNamara's habits changed. In the Cabinet he started at 7:15. Now, he says, "I keep banker's hours. I start at 8."

